DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 308 265 UD 026 814

TITLE	Urban Education in New Jersey.
INSTITUTION	New Jersey State Dept. of Education, Trenton.
PUB DATE	89
NOTE	17p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Improvement; *Educational Strategies; Elementary Secondary Education; School Districts; *State Aid; *State Programs; *State School District Relationship; *Urban Education; Urban Problems
IDENTIFIERS	New Jersey Department of Education

ABSTRACT

Thirty-six percent of New Jersey's school population attend schools in areas classified as urban. The state has reviewed and increased its role in helping local educators overcome the difficulties of the urban environment and strengthen the schools in these districts. This role is summarized in a presentation of programs and other initiatives, including the following: (1) High School Proficiency Test assistance; (2) the Urban Initiative to improve education quality; (3) the 10,000 Graduates...10,000 Jobs program; (4) Urban Youth Centers; (5) Prekindergarten Educational and Child Care Centers; (6) the appointment of staff and advisors to addressing urban needs; (7) the monitoring of school districts; (8) intervention when school districts fail to meet state standards; (9) compensatory education; (10) the Partners in Learning campaign; (11) the Adult Literacy Initiative; (12) incentives for basic skills improvement; (13) the basic skills program improvement process; (14) Bilingual Education and English-as-a-Second-Language; (15) the Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management; (16) educational technology and training centers; (17) the Effective Schools Initiative; (18) efforts to recruit and reward minority teachers; and (19) programs to improve student behavior. (VM)

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Thomas H. Kean
Governor

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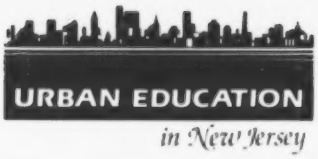

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URBAN EDUCATION
in New Jersey

INTRODUCTION

Nearly 400,000 children – roughly 36 percent of New Jersey's school population - attend one of 56 school districts classified as "urban." These districts do not fit a single mold. They include small cities, large urban centers and heavily populated townships.

The educational goals in urban districts are the same as those in suburban and rural areas: to provide students with the educational opportunities they need to function in a complex democracy. All students must be offered the opportunity to learn to read, write and solve math problems. All students must be offered the skills that will enable them to think critically, make intelligent decisions and earn a living in a technological society.

Under the direction of Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman, the New Jersey State Department of Education helps local districts meet these educational goals through a variety of programs and initiatives. But it is local educators - not state officials - who have the power to build successful schools and improve student performance.

This booklet provides an overview of New Jersey's role in helping local educators offer their students the "thorough and efficient" educational opportunity guaranteed them by New Jersey's state constitution.

Tom Kean

Thomas H. Kean
Governor

THE CHALLENGE

The problems of substance abuse and disruptive behavior, teenage pregnancy and high dropout rates are not unique to urban areas. These and other stubborn social ills also exist in more affluent communities. Sadly, however, they are magnified in many city schools.

Too often educators of urban children feel overwhelmed by the chronic problems in their communities. They point to poverty, crime, transient populations and a lack of positive role models as overwhelming obstacles to quality education.

But educational standards must not be lowered in the face of difficult problems. On the contrary, high performance standards are especially critical to students who may be lacking in strong support systems and positive role models. To enable urban students to become productive citizens capable of competing successfully in an increasingly complex world, they must be helped to meet the same educational standards as their suburban or rural peers.

WHAT WORKS IN URBAN SCHOOLS

The success of particular city schools in New Jersey and across the country proves that all students can learn, given the chance.

What makes the difference between good schools and those that simply pass their students on unprepared to colleges and employers? Much of the answer can be found in a body of research known as "Effective Schools" studies. Over the past 20 years, these studies have identified characteristics generally shared by schools that successfully educate their

students, regardless of neighborhood, socioeconomic status or family structure.

Those characteristics are:

- Principals who exercise strong leadership;
- Staffs that share common goals and work together to achieve them;
- Teacher accountability for student performance;
- Collegiality among the staff and support for experimentation;
- High expectations for student mastery of basic skills;
- Adequate time devoted by teachers and students to academic tasks;
- A school atmosphere that is safe and orderly, yet not oppressive;
- An emphasis on structured learning activities; and
- A system for monitoring student progress.

These characteristics can be distilled into two general principles: strong leadership and a positive learning environment.

STATE AND DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the state's responsibility to help urban districts strengthen their schools. The New Jersey State Department of Education exercises that responsibility by setting fundamental educational standards and by offering programs to local districts to help them build effective schools.

Since urban districts face the greatest challenge in meeting New Jersey's raised performance standards, the state gears many of its assistance and incentive programs specifically to them. The Department of Education further assists urban districts by guaranteeing them participation in voluntary incentive programs designed to help school districts throughout the state.

But effective schools are not constructed with the state's blueprint, tools and training alone. The actual craftsmanship - the hard work of setting sound policies, putting them into action and educating students - must be accomplished by local boards of education, district administrators, school principals, teachers and individual parents.

The state does suggest what should be done to meet the challenge of urban education, and how that can be done. But it is the responsibility of local educators, community leaders and concerned parents to ensure that all students are offered the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

URBAN EDUCATION
in New Jersey

STATE ACTIVITIES TO ASSIST URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

New Jersey offers a number of programs that are of particular help to urban school districts. These include:

HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY TEST ASSISTANCE EFFORTS

In 1984, New Jersey introduced the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT). This new state graduation test measures students' abilities to comprehend reading passages, solve multiple-step math problems and write a coherent essay - skills needed to compete in a changing technological society.

Some critics argued when the HSPT was introduced that large numbers of students - especially city children - would fail it. Yet while many urban students still lag behind their suburban peers, the math, reading and writing passing rates of city students have increased by more than 25 percentage points. That encouraging statistic is due to hard work in local districts as well as several programs introduced by the State Department of Education. These include:

HSPT SUMMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS - Since 1985, the state has sponsored summer programs for certain high school students who fail the HSPT on their first attempt in the ninth grade. Districts are provided with funds to conduct academic programs in the morning. They may also request money to pay participating students to work in the afternoon.

Students who take part in these programs receive more than remedial instruction and summer jobs. When the students return to school in the fall, their academic performance is closely tracked by coordinators from the summer programs. Coordinators encourage students to participate in special activities designed to motivate "at-risk" youths. They also keep parents informed about their children's progress.

Post-tests given at the end of the summer show that most students who take part in these programs register significant gains in reading, writing and math scores. More important, those gains are sustained and enhanced throughout the school year. When participating students take the HSPT in April - nine months after the end of the summer programs - most score significantly higher than they did on the post-test.

During their pilot year, these six-week, remedial programs were offered only to urban vocational students who had performed poorly on the first, unofficial administration of the HSPT.

In 1986, the department opened the program to at-risk students in New Jersey's 17 lowest performing districts, all of which were urban. Those districts were provided with $1.5 million to draw up comprehensive plans to help students who had failed the HSPT. These plans include remedial instruction in the summer and assistance activities during the school year.

In 1987, the department awarded $2 million in grants to 25 urban and county vocational districts in which students performed poorly on the exam.

In 1988, the state will provide another $2 million for HSPT assistance seminars. Thirty-three urban school districts have been invited to apply for the funds and most are expected to take part in the program.

HSPT INSTITUTES -

The department offers training at three facilities, called regional curriculum services units, or RCSUs, to help teachers learn how to prepare students for the HSPT. Since the institutes were opened in 1985, their mission has grown to train not only junior high and high school teachers, but kindergarten and primary school educators as well. Half of all teachers who participate in institute programs work in urban schools. In addition, teachers from eight of the state's largest cities have attended department-sponsored institutes held within their local districts.

HSPT CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT WORKSHOPS -

To help local educators ensure that their students are taught the skills measured by the HSPT, the department conducted numerous workshops at its RCSUs during the first two years the test was administered. Twenty-eight urban districts participated in these four-day workshops.

The HSPT now tests skills at the ninth-grade level. However, the state is seeking to move the exam to the 11th-grade level, beginning in 1993. Raising the bar will require local districts to revamp their remedial and training programs - tasks in which the department will assist. More important, it will help to ensure that New Jersey high school graduates are fully prepared to enter the world before them.

URBAN INITIATIVE

Under the umbrella of its Urban Initiative, New Jersey sponsors a collection of projects aimed at helping urban school districts improve the quality of education they provide. This comprehensive, two-pronged initiative, launched in 1985, consists of the Broad-Based Component, designed to offer a variety of pilot improvement programs to the state's urban school districts, and Operation School Renewal, a targeted effort to achieve five specific goals in three urban districts.

BROAD-BASED COMPONENT -

A majority of New Jersey's urban districts are involved in 34 pilot programs and 21 grant programs designed to address 10 issues critical to student achievement. The programs aim to:

- Improve reading skills;
- Improve writing skills;
- Improve math skills;
- Reduce incidents of disruptive behavior;
- Help students in remedial and bilingual programs meet state graduation requirements;
- Help dropouts get diplomas and jobs;
- Increase job placements for vocational education graduates;
- Improve special education options for high school students;
- Increase instructional use of computers; and
- Treat and prevent substance abuse.

The state also provides training and technical assistance to participating districts.

OPERATION SCHOOL RENEWAL -

Through this concentrated component of the Urban Initiative, three school districts - East Orange, Neptune and Trenton - are addressing five problems common to many city schools. Those problems are:

- Poor student attendance;
- Low reading, writing and math scores;

- Principal ineffectiveness;
- Disruptive behavior; and
- Youth unemployment.

The three districts are tackling these problems through a variety of programs designed with the help of department staff. The initiative aims to reduce the severity of these chronic problems and to provide a practical base of knowledge about what works in urban schools, and what does not.

10,000 GRADUATES...10,000 JOBS

Students must know that if they study hard and stay in school, their efforts will be rewarded. In New Jersey, local and state education leaders are working together to provide that assurance.

Aiming to place 10,000 urban high school graduates in entry-level jobs by 1992, the 10,000 Graduates...10,000 Jobs program has two fundamental objectives: to offer students in city schools an incentive to finish high school and to provide New Jersey businesses and industries with reliable, well-prepared employees they need. Participating students are guaranteed jobs in private industry after they graduate.

The 10,000 Jobs program was piloted in 1987 with five urban districts; 21 more districts joined within a year. In 1988, the department planned to recruit additional urban districts.

URBAN YOUTH CENTERS

Students who leave school before obtaining a high school diploma face extreme difficulty in trying to create productive, fulfilling lives for themselves and their families. To offset the chronically high attrition rates that plague many city schools, urban youth centers are operated in cities throughout the state. The purpose of these state-funded centers is threefold: to provide youths with personal counseling; to offer them the academic assistance they need to prepare for high school equivalency diploma exams; and to help them find employment and job training opportunities.

PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE CENTERS

Since 1985, New Jersey has devoted hundreds of millions of dollars and great effort to helping urban school districts improve the quality of education they provide their students. Still, too many of our city children arrive at kindergarten burdened with overwhelming problems and inadequately prepared to succeed in school. One out of every four New Jersey three- and four-year-olds - about 46,000 children - lives in poverty.

Research shows that providing such children with appropriate prekindergarten instruction pays off later in successful academic performance.

To help ensure that urban children receive the solid educational foundation and services they need, Governor Kean in his 1988 State of the State address called for the creation of pilot programs to provide prekindergarten education and extended child care for three- and four-year-olds in several urban areas. These programs will be launched by the State Department of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Human Services.

STAFF AND ADVISORS ADDRESSING URBAN NEEDS

In addition, Commissioner Cooperman has created the post of Special Assistant to the Commissioner for Urban Education, as well as 11 positions for urban specialists in county offices of education. He has also appointed an Urban Education advisory committee made up of urban school superintendents and community, civic and religious leaders from New Jersey's cities.

Finally, the Commissioner has created an administrative fellowship for minority educators. Under the program, three to five minority educators with experience in educational administration will be selected in each of three years to work in the department. During their fellowships, the educators will work in at least two different divisions, learn about the functions of all the divisions within the department and meet with representatives from other state agencies. Although the department will not guarantee post-fellowship employment, the fellows will be considered for any appropriate vacancies that may exist after they complete their internships.

The goals of the program are twofold: to increase the department's ability to respond to critical issues in minority and urban education; and to sharpen the managerial skills of outstanding minority school administrators. The program will begin in fall 1988.

STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES HELPING URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

While many of New Jersey's statewide efforts to raise standards for students, teachers and educational leaders can benefit all school districts, the following programs emphasize urban educational improvement:

MONITORING

In 1984, the state's monitoring system was targeted and streamlined and the period of certification was increased to five years. This change eliminated unnecessary annual visits to districts that are meeting state standards and allowed the Department of Education to concentrate on districts that need assistance. It also allowed the overwhelming majority of districts that meet state standards - including most urban districts - to spend resources on innovation as they see fit.

INTERVENTION

Under a landmark law passed in 1988, the state has the authority to take control of local districts that fail to meet minimum state standards after repeated levels of monitoring and assistance - districts that have been hopelessly mired in educational failure for a decade. New Jersey's law, considered the most ambitious school intervention plan in the nation, allows the state to take control of a school district and run it for at least five years - removing its superintendent and school board - once it is determined that the district cannot or will not correct its own problems.

New Jersey's monitoring system and its plan to intervene in chronically failing school districts are designed to protect all children's rights to the "thorough and efficient" educational opportunity guaranteed them by New Jersey's state constitution.

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

Anticipating a critical need for remedial programs in districts with high HSPT failure rates, the state provided local districts with an additional $48 million in 1987 for programs designed to bring underachieving students' academic skills up to state standards. Those additional funds supplemented $110 million that already had been earmarked for remedial, or compensatory, education. Of the $158 million total, nearly $94 million - about 60 percent - went to urban districts.

Also in 1987, the state changed its compensatory aid funding formula to allow districts to receive double funding for students who need help in two areas: reading and writing skills or math. That change is expected to be especially beneficial to urban districts because of the large number of city students who need help in both basic skills areas.

In 1988, the state earmarked $148 million for compensatory education. Of that total, nearly $93 million - about 63 percent - was channeled to urban districts.

PARTNERS IN LEARNING

Good teachers can do much to inspire in children a love for learning. But they need help - the help that only parents can provide by creating a home environment that supports learning. To build parental support, New Jersey launched a statewide campaign, "Partners in Learning," in fall 1987.

The first phase of Partners in Learning was a multi-media public awareness campaign conducted in both English and Spanish. It was designed to inform parents of six simple steps they can take at home to help their children succeed in school. They are:

- Setting a quiet place for children to study;
- Checking children's homework every night;
- Making sure children get a full night's sleep;
- Arranging for children to arrive at school on time;
- Talking with children about home and school events; and
- Spending time reading with children.

The second phase of the campaign, beginning in spring 1988, recognizes schools with programs that promote successful parent-teacher partnerships.

A third phase, to be launched in fall 1988, will offer state grants and assistance to 30 schools - 15 of them in urban areas - to establish effective parent-teacher programs. As with all department pilot programs, the lessons learned in this campaign will be shared with districts throughout the state.

ADULT LITERACY INITIATIVE

In fall 1986, the department launched an Adult Literacy Initiative to expand individual, voluntary tutoring services to the estimated 700,000 New Jerseyans who are functionally illiterate. The goal of the three-year campaign is to create a statewide, grassroots network of volunteers who are willing to tutor adult non-readers.

The campaign is especially targeted at urban areas, where few literacy programs exist and those that are offered are unable to meet the demand for tutoring.

The department is recruiting major corporations to serve as "lighthouse agencies." These corporations will recruit tutors from among their employees. Using a manual drawn up by the Department of Education, the corporations also will encourage local religious, service and community organizations to become involved in the campaign. By January 1988, five corporate participants already had signed on. They were New Jersey Bell, AT&T, Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, Howard Savings Bank and IBM.

INCENTIVES FOR BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT

This program is designed to reward schools for improving students' basic skills performance. Traditionally, state basic skills funding is geared to students needing remedial help. When schools improve the performance of these students, funding is reduced. This program rewards success.

Under the program, the department provides bonuses to schools that increase beyond expectation the number of students who exit remedial programs and enter mainstream classes. These bonuses are intended to help districts sustain student gains after remedial funds are lost. Urban schools have the most to gain under this financial incentive program because of their large numbers of compensatory students.

BASIC SKILLS PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

This technical assistance program helps districts work together to review their remedial programs

and put in place plans to improve them, using current research about effective basic skills practices. Again, urban districts derive the greatest benefit from this program because of their large numbers of students needing remedial help.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Knowing two languages well can be a great advantage and a wonderful skill. Knowing the language of the majority is a necessity. To help local districts adequately prepare students for employment or post-secondary schooling, New Jersey upgraded its graduation requirements in 1985. The state now requires students with limited English proficiency (LEP) who enter school before the ninth grade to meet all state diploma requirements, including passing the state graduation test in English.

At the same time, the state recognizes that students with limited proficiency in English who enter school after grade eight must be allowed some flexibility in demonstrating their mastery of basic skills. Therefore, beginning with the graduating class of 1989, LEP students who fail the High School Proficiency Test still may graduate if they demonstrate basic knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics in English or in their native language, or both. However, such students must also pass an exam of English fluency.

To further address the needs of students with limited English proficiency, New Jersey has:

- Established regional Bilingual Education Training Institutes. These training centers have offered in-service workshops to teachers and administrators from 39 urban districts since they were created in 1985.
- Participated in a pioneering, three-year national study of the "structured immersion strategy." This strategy represents another possible way to teach students whose dominant language is not English. Classes are conducted almost exclusively in English and include the study of the students' native language and culture. These pilot programs are open to students whose parents consent to their participation.

ACADEMY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND MANAGEMENT

Research shows that learning occurs best in schools where teachers and educational leaders treat each other as professionals and work together to achieve commonly held goals. Fostering such collegiality and cooperation is one of the major goals of New Jersey's Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management. Since this state-sponsored training center was created in 1985, more than half of the state's urban districts have participated in academy programs to sharpen their staffs' teaching, supervision and management skills.

In 1987-88, nine urban districts participated in the academy's Staff Development Leader Program, a new "train-the-trainer" effort designed to promote quality and consistency in local district staff development activities and to encourage networking among districts.

Also in 1987-88, teachers in the state's largest district, Newark, piloted an academy-designed peer coaching course. In addition, six urban districts have received special assistance from academy staff in designing local staff development programs.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY TRAINING CENTERS

Ten years ago, knowledge of computers was an advantage in the marketplace. Today it is practically a necessity. To help local districts expand educational uses of computers and prepare students to function in an increasingly technological society, the department operates educational technology training centers at its three regional curriculum services units. By design, at least 50 percent of the teachers trained at the centers are from urban areas. Since the centers opened in 1985, thousands of teachers from virtually every urban district in the state have taken part in training sessions.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

While New Jersey's Urban Initiative addresses specific district-wide deficiencies, the Effective Schools Initiative is designed to improve the performance of the individual school as a whole. The initiative proceeds from certain basic assumptions: that all students can learn; that effective schools appear to share common qualities; and that a fertile learning environment can indeed enhance student learning.

New Jersey is confronting the challenge of translating effective schools research into practice by making a three-year commitment to fund effective schools pilot projects in 17 schools, nine of them in urban areas.

EFFORTS TO RECRUIT AND REWARD MINORITY TEACHERS

All children need great teachers and good role models. To help students in city schools benefit from exposure to great teachers who also happen to be members of minority groups, New Jersey recruits and rewards minority teachers through the following efforts:

MINIMUM SALARY FOR TEACHERS -

Teaching itself offers numerous rewards, but low starting salaries have discouraged many of our best and brightest from considering it as a career. In 1985, New Jersey acted to attract talented new teachers by mandating that every teacher in the state's public schools be paid at least $18,500 per year. In February 1988, Governor Kean recommended that the state increase the minimum salary to $22,000. The Governor also proposed that new teachers working in certain urban districts receive $2,000 bonuses after their first and third years of successful teaching. The proposals require legislative approval.

MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT PROGRAM -

In 1984, New Jersey adopted state standards for teachers that are among the highest in the nation. Since some minority candidates had for many reasons experienced difficulty meeting state certification standards, the department developed the Minority Teacher Recruitment Program. Under this program, the state recruits promising minority high school juniors who want to teach, helps them get through college, and assists them in finding teaching positions after they graduate. Participating students are given tuition loans of up to $7,500 per year that are forgiven for teaching for four years in an urban district in New Jersey or six years in a non-urban district.

GOVERNOR'S TEACHING SCHOLARS PROGRAM -

Another program designed to attract outstanding students to teaching is the Governor's Teaching Scholars Program. Launched in 1986, the program provides scholarship loans of up to $7,500 per year to a minimum of 160 academically talented high school seniors. The loans are forgiven for teaching four years in an urban district or six years in a non-urban district.

PROVISIONAL TEACHER PROGRAM -

New Jersey's pioneering Provisional Teacher Program, or "alternate route" to certification, allows qualified candidates who did not take teacher training courses in college to be hired by local districts and earn teaching certificates by working for a year in a closely supervised classroom setting. During that year, alternate route teachers are required to take courses in educational theory and practice. Fully 20 percent of all teachers who have entered New Jersey classrooms through the alternate route since it was created in 1985 are minority teachers.

DODGE FELLOWSHIPS -

Under a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the State Department of Education offers 15 Dodge Fellowships each year to outstanding new Provisional Teacher candidates. These $5,000 grants are to be used to enhance the teachers' knowledge and skills. Winners are selected by an independent panel of educators. Since the fellowships were first offered in 1985, 25 percent of all Dodge Fellows have been minorities.

PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Access to excellent education is one of our most cherished, fundamental rights. It is also a great privilege. New Jersey cannot and will not allow a few disruptive students to deprive other children of their right to an orderly education. In a comprehensive approach to problems of student behavior, discipline and motivation - problems that are often more acute in urban schools - the state offers many projects to help local districts achieve and maintain well-disciplined and safe environments. These include:

DRUG AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION -

By taking surveys every three years since 1980, the State Department of Education and Attorney General's Office have been tracking the use of drugs and alcohol by New Jersey high school students. The results are encouraging. They show that substance abuse among New Jersey youngsters is edging steadily downward. Nevertheless, more work is needed, especially in urban schools. The latest survey shows that 15,000 New Jersey high school students who will graduate in 1988 will leave school with drug and alcohol dependency problems.

To combat substance use and abuse, the state has:

- Assisted 27 local school districts, 10 of them Urban Initiative districts, in establishing comprehensive school substance abuse programs. Such programs are central to the Governor's Blueprint for a Drug-Free New Jersey. That plan, announced in 1986, recognizes that eliminating drug abuse will require a long-term struggle in which schools are but one element of a total community effort. Working with the Department of Education to carry out the plan

are the departments of Community Affairs, Corrections, Health, Higher Education, Human Services, and Law and Public Safety.

- Adopted a Drug and Alcohol Prevention and Intervention Plan. Under the plan, the department has revised its curriculum guidelines for drugs, alcohol and tobacco and is providing in-service teacher training on school-based prevention and intervention programs. It has also formulated new state regulations covering local districts' responsibilities in curriculum and instruction and in the evaluation and treatment of students who are affected by substance abuse.

During the 1987-88 school year, the education department budgeted more than $7 million to help local districts develop drug and alcohol education efforts.

NEW JERSEY PROJECT ON STUDENT EXPECTATIONS -

Though educators want to prevent unruly behavior, they must be careful to avoid emphasizing only the negative aspect of student conduct. Positive motivation is also critical. To promote commendable student behavior, the State Department of Education and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association have developed a program to identify and encourage the kind of behavior that creates an atmosphere conducive to learning. More than 50 percent of New Jersey's approximately 600 school districts have incorporated part or all of the student expectations project into their curriculums.

GRANT PROGRAM TO REDUCE STUDENT DISRUPTION -

The department also has earmarked over $1 million to fund six programs to deal with the behavior of chronically disruptive students in grades seven through 12. Grants to school districts allow them to develop alternative education programs that, among other things, reduce dropout rates and integrate academics with students' work experiences. The programs also maintain close contact with the students' families and enlist the help of community businesses and service organizations. Successful projects will become models for other school districts. Of the six programs funded during the 1986-87 and 1987-88 school years, three went to urban districts and two went to consortia that included urban districts.

AIDS EDUCATION -

AIDS has taken a staggering toll on New Jersey. As of January 1, 1988, 3,257 cases of the disease had been reported across the state and 1,875 New Jerseyans were known to have died from it. In addition, two New Jersey cities, Newark and Jersey City, consistently rank among the 10 American cities reporting the highest incidence of AIDS.

To ensure that students receive the information they need to protect themselves against this serious and growing epidemic, the state departments of Education and Health have developed model AIDS education policies and procedures and distributed them to local school districts. They have also conducted regional workshops to instruct district trainers on how to teach effectively about AIDS.

In addition, New Jersey has been selected by the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to take part in a five-year federally funded program to increase the number of schools teaching effectively about AIDS. The State Department of Education is one of 15 state education departments chosen in fall 1987 to participate in the CDC program.

CONCLUSION

The problems facing urban schools are stubborn and complex. It is the responsibility of the New Jersey State Department of Education to help urban districts overcome these difficulties by providing resources, training and technical assistance. It is up to each district to put these tools to work to build effective schools.

The programs are sound. They can work. But making them work requires dedication at the local level, from district administrators to school principals, teachers and parents. It also requires belief that all students can achieve academically, if they are given the opportunity.

As part of its commitment to educational improvement in New Jersey, the State Department of Education will continue to seek ways to help urban districts help their students. New Jersey's future economic and social health depend on quality education for all of its children in each of its school districts.

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
225 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625